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HANDLING INDICATOR

TO : Department of State

INFO : CINCSO FOR POLAD, Amembassy TEGUCIGALPA, SAN SALVADOR, MANAGUA,
SAN JOSE, DOD

FROM : Amembassy GUATEMALA

DATE: Jan 20, 68

SUBJECT: Weekly Internal Security Report: 1/12-18/68

REF :

This document consists
of 3 pages. Copy _____
of 8 copies. Series A.INTER: MILITARY AFFAIRS
JAN 23 1968

1. Guatemala was subjected this week to a wave of terrorism unprecedented in the Mendez regime, climaxed by the assassination of two U.S. military officers and the wounding of two other military personnel when their car was fired on by submachinegun fire from a passing car. Killed were Col. John D. Webber, Commander of the U.S. Military Group (MILGP) in Guatemala and Navy Lt. Commander Ernest A. Munro, Chief of the MILGP Naval Section. Wounded were the two other occupants of the car RMCS Harry L. Greene, also assigned to MILGP who is still in serious but not critical condition in a Guatemala hospital, and Sgt. John R. Forster, from Panama, who was only slightly wounded.

2. According to intelligence sources this attack and some of the others of the week's bloody events (see below) were perpetrated by the FAR, and on the night of January 16 the FAR circulated a bulletin to the press claiming authorship and calling the acts retaliation for the death of Rogelia CRUZ Martinez. She is a known FAR member who was kidnapped from her house in the capital on January 8 and whose dead, tortured body was found under a bridge in Escuintla on January 12. Judicial police Chief Stuardo GARCIA Gomez told press he considered Mano Blanco leader Raul LORENZANA Morales responsible for the crime.

3. One of the terrorists presumed to have been involved in the attack on the U.S. military personnel and others has already been killed by elements of the National Police. He is Leonardo CASTILLO Johnson, a top FAR leader who was a close friend of Rogelia Cruz. According to first reports he was killed in an attack on the house of National Police Chief Sosa but later reports based on more complete information say he was killed in a

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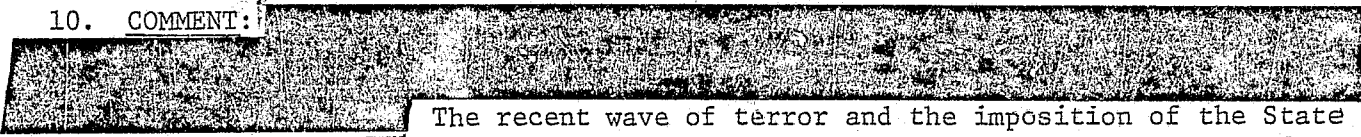
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in a State of Siege the military has the responsibility under the Minister of Defense. Congress ratified the Executive Decree on January 18th, thus fulfilling the constitutional requirement regarding conditions of emergency.

9. In an interview, the Minister of Government told reporters that with the benefit of the powers given him by the State of Alert he was confident that the current wave of violence could be curbed in a few days time. The first steps were police dragnets which reportedly resulted in the temporary arrest of a large number of persons suspected of being involved in subversive activities.

10. COMMENT:

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The recent wave of terror and the imposition of the State of Alert has obviously seriously shaken the citizenry. The mood is not one of panic, however. Most people consider that in spite of the profusion of spectacular assassinations they were probably perpetrated by a relatively small number of people, be they rightists, leftists or government agents, and that the man on the street is not directly threatened. The recent events are viewed almost as the tragic result of unfortunate political vendettas. The government is still viewed as firmly in the saddle (the State of Alert probably helped here) and there is little serious talk of the government's being in any danger.

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LIST OF INCIDENTS

- Jan. 10 - The tortured corpse of Rogelia CRUZ Martinez, former Miss Guatemala and known leftist, was found under a bridge in the Department of Escuintla. She had been reported kidnapped from her house in the capital on January 8. (See Guatemala A-253)
- 12 - Powerful bomb exploded at home of Jorge SAMAYOA Toc, extreme right wing activist. Press attributes act to left wing clandestine group.
- 12 - Flavio de Jesús DUARTE Martinez, who had been kidnapped in San Martin Jilotepeque January 10, shot and left for dead, died in a capital hospital. No motive known.
- 14 - Five bodies that had been located January 12 near Retalhuleu identified as Arnolando HERNANDEZ Pineda, Isabel GOMEZ Lopez, Cecilio MORALES and two persons known only as "El Gavilán" and "Mono Rojo". According to their families, they had been kidnapped in Escuintla on January 10 by unknown men. No motive known.
- 15 - A Military Police Sergeant was killed while standing guard at Guatemala City house of Col. Carlos ARANA Osorio, Commander of the Zacapa Military Zone. His unidentified assailants picked up his weapons before fleeing.
- 16 - 0820 Hours. Prominent lawyer and known extreme leftist Alejandro SILVA Falla and his bodyguard were machinegunned to death near his capital residence. He had been subject to previous attacks by clandestine rightist groups.
- 16 - 1000 Hours. Manuel VILLACORTA-Vielman, 1966 vice presidential candidate for rightist MLN fired on by submachinegun in front of his capital home. He escaped unharmed but his son who was with him was wounded.
- 16 - 1145 Hours. Two U.S. Military Officers, Col. John D. Webber, Commander of the U.S. Military Group (MILGP) in Guatemala, and Navy Lt. Commander Ernest A. Munro, Chief of MILGP Naval Section, were killed January 16 when their vehicle was machinegunned in Guatemala City. The two other occupants of the vehicle, RMCS Harry L. Greene, also assigned to MILGP, and Sgt. John R. Forster, from Panama, were wounded in the attack, Forster only slightly.
- 16 - 1815 Hours. Guatemalan Army Captain Justo RODRIGUEZ Diaz, a military policeman who was with him, and an innocent bystander, were wounded when Rodriguez and his companion were fired on in the capital. Rodriguez had been threatened previously for his activities when he was third in command of the Hacienda (customs) Police.

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Jan. 16 - 1830 Hours. Leonardo CASTILLO Johnson, well known guerrilla, was killed by elements of the National Police. According to first reports, he was killed while making an attack on the house of National Police Chief Sosa but later reports say he was killed when attempting to evade a police roadblock. He was identified by the press (based on GOG information) as a high ranking FAR leader and one of the participants in the attack on the U.S. military officers earlier in the day.

16 - Night. The Rebel Armed Forces (FAR) distributed a bulletin to the press claiming authorship of the attack and 2 others, all of which, according to the bulletin, were in retaliation for the death of Rogelia CRUZ Martinez. Other evidence also indicates that the FAR was responsible for the killings.

16 - Night. Executive decreed State of Alert for 30 days.

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17 - Well known conservative industrialist Alfonso ALEJOS de la Cerda was machinegunned to death in the capital by unknown men. He was best known for his articles in LA HORA, under his sign of a hammer, in which he spoke out on a number of subjects and was generally critical of the government.

17 - Body of unidentified man found shot to death in Puerto Barrios, Dept. Izabal. Press calls crime political.

18 - Band of armed men attack home of Juan Antonio TELLEZ in Nueva Concepcion, Dept. Escuintla. In ensuing gun fight Tellez and one of the attackers, identified as Miguel Angel LOPEZ Girón, were killed. No motive known.

18 - Congress ratified State of Alert.

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